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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study provides a deeper understanding of foreign language learners' attitudes toward authentic input and examines their changes in attitude and proficiency after instruction using authentic input in the foreign language classroom. Twenty-six Korean university students from two groups were randomly selected and interviewed. The experimental group was instructed with both graded and ungraded input, whereas the control group was instructed with only graded input. Each subject was interviewed at the end of the study. The results showed that both groups reported considerably low levels of confidence in their understanding of authentic input. However, the majority of students in the experimental group reported that their attitudes toward authentic input were changed positively, and their English proficiency improved over the treatment period. The study concludes with suggestions for using authentic input to improve English as a Second Language instruction. (Contains 24 references.) (Author/SM)

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A Qualitative Approach to the Authenticity in the Foreign Language Classroom: A Study of University Students Learning English in Korea

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A Qualitative Approach to the Authenticity in the Foreign Language Classroom: A Study of University Students Learning English in Korea

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This qualitative study intends to provide a deeper understanding of foreign language learners' attitudes toward authentic input and to examine their changes in attitude and proficiency after instruction using authentic input in the foreign language classroom. Twenty-six Korean university students from two groups were randomly selected and interviewed. The experimental group was instructed with both graded and ungraded input, whereas the control group was instructed with only graded input. Each subject was interviewed at the end of the study. The results showed that both groups reported considerably low levels of confidence in their understanding of authentic input. However, the majority of students in the experimental group reported that their attitudes toward authentic input were changed positively, and their English proficiency improved over the treatment period. This study concludes with suggestions for using authentic input to improve EFL education.

INTRODUCTION

The term "input" refers to language that is written or spoken to the foreign/second language learner, either by a native speaker or another foreign/second language learner (Ellis, 1985). One of the most debatable aspects of second or foreign language (L2) acquisition theory is whether input should be intentionally simplified for L2 learners (Oxford, 1993). In fact, such learners are often exposed to some modified or scripted form rather than authentic input in their foreign/second language learning (Bacon, 1992b; Chaudron & Richards, 1986; Derwing, 1989).

Several studies have explored how teachers and others alter input intended for learners. In a study by Chaudron and Richards (1986), speakers intentionally slowed their rate of speech when they perceived their audience as nonnative speakers. While analyzing conversation between native and nonnative speakers, Derwing (1989) also discovered that native speakers increased the amount of background detail they provided to nonnative speakers when there were communication difficulties between them.

However, the effects of these kinds of modifications on comprehension and learning are less clear. Kelch (1985) found that a reduced speech rate was positively correlated with comprehension. Jacobs, et al. (1988) showed a significant effect of pausing on listening comprehension, but failed to see a significant relationship between the rate of speech and listening comprehension. According to Jacobs et al., a lengthy pause or slowed speed may trigger listeners' boredom or loss of focus so that their comprehension is impeded. Chaudron and Richards

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(1986) also suggested that "[a]lthough learners may benefit by being able to segment words in slowed input, their short-term memory lacks the capacity to hold thoughts long enough for further processing. In addition, slowed speech, or artificially inserted pauses or other discourse markers may cause the hearer to lose linguistic information, such as intonation, which is important for comprehension" (1986, p. 399).

The idea of using authentic input in L2 instruction has been gaining support from a number of researchers (Allen, Bernhardt, Berry, & Demel, 1988; Bacon, 1992b; Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Bragger, 1985; Ciccone, 1995; Herron & Seay, 1991; Lee, 1995; Secules, Herron, & Tomasello, 1992). These studies posit that authentic input offers L2 learners both linguistic and cultural information that may not be available in pedagogical texts used in the traditional classroom. Bragger (1985) argued that "[e]verything we do with the language must be authentic" (1985:85). Bacon (1992b) observed a high value of authentic input in foreign/second language classrooms. According to her, authentic input enriches the cultural ingredient of the curriculum, mirrors real language use, and challenges teachers to help students develop appropriate learning strategies. Young (1980) noted that authentic input is motivating, interesting, and useful, with content that does not cause foreign language learners' culture shock or discomfort. Glisan (1988) argued that foreign language learners should not practice their listening comprehension through the exclusive use of question-answer formats to follow listening passages or conversations. She contended that foreign/second language teachers should give their students practice with natural listening tasks to improve their listening proficiency. Garza (1990) maintained that authentic input provides foreign language learners with cultural richness, which is a key element in understanding the foreign language.

Although using authentic input in foreign language instruction is becoming more common, some considerations are needed. Bacon (1992b) perceived a fine line between input that enhances and that which frustrates the learner. Several researchers, in fact, have proposed that learning with authentic input too early in foreign language acquisition could be not only a frustrating and anxiety-ridden experience for students but also an impractical approach for teachers. For example, Ur (1984) and Vande Berg (1993) suggested that activities with unedited input will increase learners' frustration; thus, those activities should be reserved for the highest levels in the curriculum.

Benefits and drawbacks of using authentic input in the foreign/second language classroom can be considered in Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1981), which proposes that language is acquired through comprehensible input. "Comprehensible input" can be defined as language that is simplified or appropriate to the language learner's capability. Implicit ac-

quisition of grammatical rules occurs when input to the learner is just a little beyond the learner's present linguistic capability (i+1). There is some doubt whether authentic input can be comprehensible input for L2 learners, especially for those at early stages of learning.

Omaggio (1993) argued that although authentic input may provide foreign language learners with culturally appropriate input, this language may not expose students to comprehensible input at the earliest stages of acquisition. Finally, Oxford (1993) observed both advantages and disadvantages of using simplified, edited nonauthentic input in the foreign language classroom. Based on the above observations, the present study is an attempt to have a closer look at foreign language learners' attitudes toward authentic input and to examine their changes in attitude and proficiency after instruction using authentic input in the foreign language classroom.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects for this qualitative study were 26 students, randomly selected from two universities in Korea, with an intermediate level of English proficiency. The subjects included 12 male and 14 female students who had enrolled in English classes as part of their program requirements. 17 students were chosen to form a control group, and the other nine students were assigned to the experimental group. The control group was instructed using only nonauthentic input that was scripted and graded for the English lessons. For the experimental group, however, authentic input replaced the nonauthentic input in some portions of the lessons.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used in this study: 1) Interview Guide, 2) The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and 3) The Test of English with Authentic Input (TEAI). First, the Interview Guide was developed by the author in order to obtain more in-depth information on the subjects' English learning and existing attitudes toward authentic input. It included 24 items divided into four sections: four warm-up questions, eight questions concerning general English study, ten questions pertaining to authentic input, and two closing questions.

The TOEIC, a graded and scripted test, was developed to measure the English proficiency of individuals whose native language is not English. The test consists of two sections with a total of 200 questions. The first section aims to test students' listening comprehension, and the other section pertains to reading comprehension. Each section has 100 multiple-choice items. For this study, only the listening section was adopted.

Finally, the author developed the TEAI, an English test using authentic input. The test is composed of 20 open-ended questions pertaining to a passage from the Associated Press (AP) news service. All questions in the test were written in the students' L1. Subjects were also allowed to answer in the L1. The author selected the

newscasts to measure students' English proficiency in comprehending authentic input because they are directed to native English speakers. Thus, they contain normal spoken speed and accents. The speed and structure in the AP newscasts were not altered for nonnative speakers of English.

Data Collection Procedures

During the present research, the author was employed as a part-time lecturer for English classes at two universities in Korea. In order to generalize more effectively, the author followed a random sampling procedure by choosing every tenth student on the roster of every class. 28 students from a total of 284 were selected by this procedure. However, two of those chosen declined to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted at the end of the semester. Prior to an interview, each student read and signed a consent form regarding the study. The interview questions were open-ended, and the entire session lasted about 30 minutes for each subject. In order to control for the differences in the interviewees' levels of speaking proficiency in English, each interview was tape-recorded in Korean. All students were asked the same questions in the interview guide. However, several questions about authentic input were excluded for subjects who had not been exposed to authentic input during the study.

All subjects took the TOEIC and TEAI twice, in the beginning and at the end of the semester. For the TOEIC, the subjects were given 45 minutes to answer the 100 listening questions. For the TEAI, the subjects read the questions before they listened to each news passage. Subjects were told prior to each question that the following section would be about a certain question and stopped the tape-recorder for each question. The subjects heard the passage for each question twice, and were allowed about 15 seconds to answer each question. The test took about 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

The author analyzed the interview data according to the following procedure: 1) transcribing the interviews, 2) coding the transcripts, and 3) constructing the results. First, the author transcribed the interview tapes. Next, the author began the coding process, which assisted in transforming the raw interview data into aggregated, meaningful units (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The transcripts were initially coded based on the questions from the interview guide. Scrutinizing each transcript, however, the author was able to identify common themes and patterns. Each interviewee was assigned a unique number from 1 to 26, and this number, along with the applicable code, was listed in a coding matrix. This procedure enabled the author to note which codes were evident within each interview, and when several interviewees discussed similar issues or concerns within any given theme. From this procedure, a code matrix, that is a list of common codes and themes, was constructed.

In the process of constructing the results, the author attempted to establish trustworthiness by engaging in the following two techniques: 1) triangulation and 2) negative case analysis. Triangulation of multiple sources is a crucial technique employed by a researcher to establish trustworthiness and enhance the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to triangulate the data, the author examined multiple interview transcripts for common codes, themes, and patterns. This information was compiled by code. The code matrix served at a quick glance as a means to identify the recurrent patterns among the interviews by showing whether a code was evident in one, some, or all of the interviews. Therefore, the code matrix assisted the author in examining the results because it delineated triangulated themes as well as codes supported by only one individual.

The author also used negative case analysis in order to provide trustworthiness in interpreting results of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The author carefully and critically examined the transcripts for examples that were contradictory; these incidents are discussed in the results (below). Thus, this study attempted to report both the majority and the minority points of view, noting areas of conflict as well as consensus.

RESULTS

The interview data was analyzed and grouped into three themes, according to common characteristics: 1) general English learning, 2) attitudes toward authentic input, and 3) suggestions regarding instruction. Each theme contains its own subthemes as listed in Table 1. Each subtheme will be discussed using quotes when appropriate in the following sections. Many of the characteristics were triangulated by a number of the participants, and in several cases by all interviewees.

Theme 1: General English Learning

This section provides general information about the subjects' English learning. Most subjects reported that they began their English studies either in the first grade of middle school or a year before entering middle school. The purpose for studying English was diverse across subjects; however, career preparation was a dominant motivation. Most subjects reported the critical role of English proficiency in their careers. One student pointed out, "English is an essential part of the examination for every job opening. I think 90% of any job examination includes English" (#1: 49; here and in all other notations, the first number refers to the interviewee and the second number refers to the line(s) from the transcript of the interview).

By contrast, several students whose future careers did not mandate English proficiency displayed a lack of motivation to study English (#20 and #22). For example, English was an optional subject for students majoring in Law. According to these students, they were allowed to choose any foreign language for their required test. They mentioned that English was an attractive

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIONS OF SUB-THEMES OF MAJOR THEMES

Major Themes	Abbreviation Of Sub-Themes	Description Of Sub-Themes
General English Learning	GEL 1	The purposes for studying English and the importance of English in one's career
	GEL 2	Areas of confidence and lack of confidence in learning English
	GEL 3	Difficulties in listening comprehension
	GEL 4	The important areas in learning English
	GEL 5	Methods of learning English prior to the semester
	GEL 6	Levels of satisfaction with previous English education
Attitudes toward Authentic Input	AAI 1	Experiences with listening to authentic input prior to the semester
	AAI 2	Listening to authentic input in the present
	AAI 3	Comprehension level of authentic input
	AAI 4	Comparisons of authentic input and general instructional input in terms of the levels of difficulties
	AAI 5	Feelings about listening to the AP newscast in the pretest
	AAI 6	Feelings about listening to the AP newscast in the present
	AAI 7	Comparison of authentic input and general instructional input in terms of their benefits in learning English
	AAI 8	Future plan about listening to authentic input
Suggestions	S	Suggestions for better English education

language to most applicants for a legal position; however, the level of the English test was extremely high compared to that of other foreign language tests such as those for French, Spanish, or German. Therefore, those foreign languages were preferred for later testing instead of English (#20: 17-23; #22: 25-30).

The results also showed that reading comprehension was the area of greatest confidence, whereas listening and speaking were the most vulnerable areas in English learning (#1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, and 26). Difficulties in listening comprehension included the rapidity of English utterances (#11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 25); the flap phenomenon in English utterances (#15 and 16); and the unfamiliarity of words in English utterances (#12 and 15). Several students also mentioned that they felt listening comprehension to be very difficult because what they had learned or knew about English pronunciation was so different from English spoken in real situations (#2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, and 13).

For instance, students in the experimental group reported the following: "I realized that the pronunciation in the AP newscasts is different from what I know" (#6: 119). "I doubt if English cassette tapes sold in stores contain real English native speakers' voices. . . . When I listened to those kinds of tapes and met native speakers of English, I found that there are huge differences between English from the two sources....General listening input in cassette tapes seems to be easy to understand, but the AP newscasts or CNN is too difficult for me. It seems to be too fast. I rarely catch words" (#4: 95-106).

The majority of students interviewed believed that listening and speaking are more important than reading and writing in foreign language learning (#1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, and 26). During their middle and high school days, reading comprehension and grammar analysis tended to be the main foci in English lessons, whereas developing communication skills was overlooked (# 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25). According to the subjects, English teachers spent a great deal of time analyzing the contents of texts and explaining grammar in their classes. That direction of English instruction reflects an emphasis on reading comprehension and grammar analysis in the English test for college admissions in Korea (#3: 91-92; #5: 47; #6: 84-85; #7: 97; 16: 95-86; # 17: 78-79; #24: 55-59). However, most students (except # 12 and 24) showed dissatisfaction or regret with their English learning during their middle or high school days. For example, one student indicated, "In retrospect, I am not satisfied with the way I learned English in middle and high school days. However, we had no choice at that time. We just had to follow the teacher's direction. We were very passive" (# 21: 90-91).

Theme 2: Attitudes Toward Authentic Input

The Associated Press (AP) newscasts provided by the American Forces Korean Network (AFKN) are accessible to most Koreans, depending where they are living. The interview data indicated that more than half of the subjects (16 out of 26 students) had previous exposure to authentic input prior to the semester; however, the total amount of the exposure was extremely small. Several students reported that listening occasions lasted just a few seconds while they changed channels (#2: 115; #4: 123; #6: 115-121, #12: 151-153; #26: 119). Additionally, some students watched or listened to authentic input for fun without understanding it (#1, 3, 13, 19, 21, 24, and 25). Among this group, two students obviously showed that they did not attempt to understand what they heard. "I just watched it without paying attention" (#3: 113) "When I was bored, I just watched it without paying any attention" (#13: 162).

The interview data revealed that most students were not confident in comprehending authentic input; moreover, the level of authentic input comprehension was influenced by their background knowledge. A number of students reported that if they were provided visuals, they could connect what they knew to incoming messages (#3, 8, 13, 14, 19, 21, 25, and 26). For this reason, listening to the radio was a more difficult task for them than watching TV. Several comments included: "If I know something about the content of the newscast, I might understand around 30% of the newscast, whereas if I don't know the issue, I might understand only 10% of the newscast" (#3: 125-127) "Frankly speaking, I understand English broadcasts more on screen than from the sound alone" (#8: 103). "Radio seems to be more difficult than TV. With TV visuals, it is easier to understand" (#14: 165).

Authentic input also seemed to be too difficult for a majority of the students (23 out of 26 students) to understand, compared to graded input. The biggest difficulty in understanding authentic input was the fast speaking rate (#4, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 25), followed by unclear articulation (#2, 7, and 15), lack of word knowledge (#4), and lack of proper background knowledge on the listening text (#5). Examples of comments are: "I think the AP newscasts are much harder than the TOEIC.... Words in the AP newscasts are Greek to me, and the speed of the AP newscasts is too fast for me" (#4: 131). "The tone of voice in the AP newscasts change so rapidly" (#2: 127).

Several students reported that general English learning materials like the TOEIC are graded and edited for nonnative speakers of English (#1, 7, 19, and 22). Thus, these materials are easy for them to understand. According to these students, the TOEIC has a certain format. Therefore, test takers can become accustomed to the test with practice. The AP newscasts, however, always provide something different, challenging one's listening skills. Several students' comments suggested these aspects: "Tests such as the TOEIC has (sic) a certain format, so our scores on the TOEIC will be conspicuously increased if we

study it for several months, according to my senior friend" (#1: 178-179). "There was one thing that I definitely realized while I took the TOEIC. Native speakers of English seemed to speak in abnormal speed during the test in order to let students listen well. However, when I listened to the AP newscasts, I felt that I was listening to real English" (#22: 150-152).

The majority of the students reported that they were frustrated or embarrassed when they took the pretest of the TEAI (except #15, 17, and 26). This attitude was expressed as follows: "I am at a loss" (#2: 134). "Frankly speaking, I was shocked when I took the test the first time. I think everybody felt the same. It's too fast....I was really embarrassed" (#3: 133-136). "I thought, 'How can I understand this kind of thing....' It's kind of frustrating" (#6: 143). "I felt that I was the worst" (#18: 134).

The question of one's feelings about listening to the AP newscast at the end of semester was appropriate only for the students in the experimental group. Seven out of nine students in this group reported some kind of positive aspects from the treatment. First, in psychological terms, their frustration or embarrassment with authentic input seemed to diminish during the treatment. Two students reported that their sense of awkwardness when hearing authentic input seemed less than earlier in the semester (#2: 141; #9: 151). Other students revealed changes in their attitudes as well. "I was less frustrated and embarrassed when I took the second test than the first test" (#3: 146-147). "I cannot say that I am perfectly accustomed to that kind of news, but I am a little more accustomed to those input" (#7: 169-171).

Second, their comprehension seemed to improve over the semester. Several students mentioned this. "My knowledge of English words became better....I can understand some part of the news now" (#5: 161-163). "I think my listening comprehension for authentic input has improved" (#6: 147). "I just got about two words at first, but I got five or six words later" (#7: 161). Finally, they seemed to note the value of authentic input in their English learning. Several students commented on this: "I felt the necessity of studying authentic input much during the semester. . . . I feel I need to study authentic input" (#2: 143-148). "These days, I try to concentrate more on listening to authentic input" (#6: 151). One student reported that the TOEIC seemed to have become much slower listening input to him over the treatment period. Because he was accustomed to listening to rapid speech, as on the AP newscasts, he became more comfortable when he took the TOEIC test later (#8: 140-149).

On the other hand, one student reported that there was no change in his attitude toward authentic input between the pre- and post-test (#1: 196). In addition, several students suggested that although they learned many words, they still had difficulty understanding authentic input (#1: 200; #5: 161; #7: 163-164).

Sixteen out of 26 students from the two universities thought that studying authentic input would be

more conducive to the improvement of their English learning. The reason for this belief was that they involved diverse topics that rouse the subjects' interest and motivation to listen. They pointed out the merits of using authentic input in English learning in comments such as these: "Authentic input such as the AP newscasts will be more beneficial for us .... It's real happenings....The TOEIC is too monotonous. Though the TOEIC is easy to understand, it will be not be as useful as the AP newscasts in the future" (#2: 150-157). "In my opinion, though authentic input is difficult to comprehend, they are interesting and motivating because they talk about current issues" (#3: 150-151). One student offered a metaphor to compare authentic input and a graded textbook as follows: "I want to describe the graded textbook as a dictionary that has only A, B, and C. But authentic material is a dictionary that contains A to Z" (#23: 231-232).

Several students, however, had negative attitudes toward the use of authentic input in the classroom. "The speed of the AP newscasts is too fast for beginners, I think. . . . Nobody can understand them" (#1: 204-210). "For motivation, I think the TOEIC is better because it is more familiar to me" (#11: 165). "The AP newscasts were too difficult, to tell the truth" (#17: 168).

Some students proposed a combination of both authentic and structured materials. "In my opinion, if you combine those two, students would like it" (#3: 154). "Both materials are good" (# 4: 162). Two students revealed that they think the TOEIC is better as an instructional tool, while the newscasts are better for generating students' motivation (#7: 176, 190, 203-206; #8: 153-154). Conversely, one student thought that studying the TOEIC was more interesting, but that the AP newscasts would be more effective for improving the individual's English proficiency (#9: 158-159). A student also confessed that she could not prefer one over the other because she thought that the TOEIC would be better for beginners and the AP newscasts would be better for advanced learners (#15: 158-159).

Instruction with a good balance of the two types of input was regarded as a desirable approach to facilitate students' English learning; that is, excessive use of authentic input would be detrimental to students' English learning. One student suggested the following: "In my opinion, if a teacher uses the authentic input sometimes, it will prompt students' motivation. But if the teacher always uses the input, it would yield adverse effects for the students" (# 17: 172-173).

Theme 3: Suggestions

Finally, subjects in this study were allowed to comment on any themes they previously had discussed in their interviews. The data offer several suggestions for English foreign language education in Korea. First, the subjects maintained that there was a dire need for fundamental reform in English education (#2, 3, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18, and 24). According to them, their English education during middle and

high school days mainly emphasized reading comprehension and grammar analysis. These subjects regretted that they had received insufficient instruction in listening and speaking during that period.

One student's comments are especially notable because he described how listening comprehension activities were converted to reading comprehension activities. According to him, although English classes for listening comprehension were allotted to students in high school, the classes were supplemented with reading comprehension activities. The English teachers in high school spent their time more in analyzing sentences or grammar of listening materials instead of letting the students hear them. The English teachers assumed that the written form would not only be easy for them to deal with, but also easy for their students to study. The student, however, strongly disagreed that this kind of transfer would occur (#24:198-203).

Second, many subjects suggested that English teachers should try to make English class interesting and lead the class in the practical use of English (#4, 5, 6, 12, and 13). According to them, English lessons should stimulate their interest. If not, they will become exhausted easily (#4, 5, and 13). Teachers should introduce intriguing materials into class (#15) and provide students with the opportunities to "use the English of daily life as much as they can" (#16).

Finally, they proposed that students should listen to authentic input in order to improve their English listening proficiency. One student stated that English teachers in Korea seemed to be somewhat careless about their English pronunciation or accent because they seldom speak English in their classes (#10: 239-241). Therefore, for students, there was a lack of experience with listening to English. This subject further maintained that her English teachers' pronunciation was much different from that of native speakers of English. Other students commented as follows: "I think that textbooks for listening comprehension in college are too easy for us. I want to ask the teachers to raise the difficulty level of the textbooks in order to comprehend authentic input such as the AP newscasts" (#18: 196-197). "I think one should become accustomed to the speed of native speakers of English. We have become too accustomed to the edited speed" (#22: 207-208).

Discussion

The qualitative approach applied in this study is intended to inform a better understanding of these individuals, taking into account the relevant context of their learning. A summary and discussion of this approach to the research follows.

The results showed that Korean university students were generally highly motivated to study English, largely because of their future careers. They had more confidence in reading than in listening and speaking because great emphasis had been placed on reading comprehension and grammar in their previous English courses. Their difficulties in listening compre-

hension included the rapidity of speech, the flap phenomenon, the lack of background knowledge, and the unfamiliarity of words in English passages. They perceived that their listening and speaking skills were their weakest areas in their English learning, and they attributed their weakness in those skills to the impracticality of the English they had learned during their middle and high school days.

Although many subjects had been exposed previously to authentic input, the length of exposure was very limited. In addition, most experiences with authentic input were generally for entertainment, without any attempts to understand the material. Most students regarded authentic input as very difficult, so that they were not confident at all in understanding the input. Because they had seldom been exposed to authentic input and they had no experience with tests that used authentic input, most students expressed their embarrassment or frustration in their performance on the pretest of the TEAI. However, the majority of students in the experimental group reported that their affective state had improved on the posttest of the TEAI. In addition, they thought their comprehension of the authentic input had improved as well, although they still thought that comprehending authentic input was a very difficult task.

There were conflicting responses pertaining to the benefits of authentic input in English learning. More than half of the students reported that authentic input would be conducive to gains in English proficiency in the long run. In particular, a number of students felt that the use of authentic input generated motivation and interest. Several other students, however, opposed incorporating authentic input into the English classroom because they thought it was so difficult that it would discourage students or jade their interest in English.

Most students' suggestions for English education in Korea pertained to the need to shift from emphasizing reading comprehension and grammar to listening and speaking. They also suggested that more intriguing materials and practical teaching methods should be employed in order to facilitate their English learning. Finally, they felt that they should listen to authentic input to improve their English proficiency substantially.

Like most qualitative approaches, the present qualitative study involved some limitations on data collection and data analysis. Thus, one should be cautious in interpreting the results. One concern is that the subjects in this study may not have reported their disposition toward authentic input accurately to the author. According to Bacon (1992a), in using interview data, there is always the danger that subjects will respond in the manner that they think the researcher expects. The author's dual roles as an instructor and an interviewer might also have influenced the students' inaccurate responses if any. Despite this limitation, this qualitative study permitted a deeper insight into students' general English learning and attitudes toward authentic input. In

addition, it drew productive suggestions from students for better English education in Korea.

Conclusion

The present study has undertaken a more in-depth look at Korean EFL university students' attitudes toward authentic input and to examine their changes in attitude and proficiency after instruction using authentic input in EFL classrooms. Results of the study showed that the majority of students in the experimental group reported that their attitudes toward authentic input were changed positively, and they believed that their English proficiency improved over the semester. Therefore, the use of authentic input should be conducive to the eventual improvement of foreign language learners' language proficiency. In addition, authentic input appears to be a factor in creating an optimal affective state for foreign language learners. The contents of authentic input usually involve current and intriguing topics that may arouse students' interest. Thus, foreign language learners will be released from a self-conscious and stressful situation by learning this kind of input. Authentic input may also play an important role in developing foreign language learners' positive attitudes toward foreign language learning so that they will practice language skills to enhance their language proficiency outside as well as inside class.

In conclusion, although some foreign/second language theorists still question the use of authentic input in L2 classrooms (Ur, 1984; Vande Berg, 1993), the results of this study support the positive aspects of using authentic input in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, foreign language teachers should consider using authentic input in order to improve their students' foreign language proficiency. Finally, in order to draw solid conclusions on this issue, further empirical studies are needed, especially in those contexts where little research has been done.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Warm-up Questions

Could you introduce yourself?
What is your major?
How do you like your program?
What are your future plans?

Questions concerning General English Learning

How long have you studied English?
What is your main reason that for studying English?
What do you perceive to be your strengths and weaknesses in the study of English?
What do you perceive to be your difficulties in listening comprehension?
Which language skills do you think are the most important and the least important?
In what ways did you study English before you entered college?
Were you satisfied with your English learning in classes before this semester? If you weren't, please tell me the reason.
How do you study English today?

Questions concerning Authentic Input

Do you have access to the AFKN (American Forces Korean Network) or Hong Kong Star TV programs at home?
Have you ever listened to those programs before? If you have, how long have you listened to them?
Have you ever attempted to listen to those programs intending to study English before?
Do you listen to those programs these days? If you do, how long do you listen to them?
How much of those programs do you understand?
What do you think the level of difficulties of those input (AFKN or Hong Kong Star TV programs) compared to other traditional listening materials, such as English conversation cassette tapes, the TOEFL, or TOEIC?
What was your emotional state when you took the pretest of the TEAI? Did you feel that the test was too difficult, or did you feel any depression while taking the test? How did you feel about your comprehension of the TEAI?
How was your emotional state when taking the pretest different from your emotional state when taking the posttest of the TEAI? How did you feel about your comprehension of the input?

What do you think about learning English through newscasts in class? What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of learning English through the use of those input? Which input--newscasts or traditional sources--do you think are more conducive to improving one's ultimate or substantial English proficiency?

Do you have a plan to listen to newscasts in the future?

Closing Questions

Are there any other important issues that have not been addressed but you would like to discuss? Tell me if you have any.

Is it okay to e-mail you or contact you if I have any additional questions or need to clarify your responses?

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